Nationalisation of water resources

*456. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tamil Nadu Government has protested against the Kerala Government's reported proposal to build dams across some rivers flowing between the two States;

(b) whether the Central Government propose to consider a long-standing demand of nationalising the water resources in view of such disputes which have increased in the recent past; and

(c) if not, what other measures Government are contemplating to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): (a) In December, 2002, the State of Tamil Nadu has written to the Central Government regarding launching of a new scheme of constructing a weir across river Bhavani near Mukkali village to divert water to the west outside the Cauvery basin by the State of Kerala and requested Central Government to take up the matter with Government of Kerala and prevail upon it for not proceeding in any manner with the construction of the proposed weir. Subsequently, the State of Tamil Nadu has filed Petitions before the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) objecting to the undertaking of the construction of the scheme by the State of Kerala. The CWDT has on April 2, 2003 directed the State of Kerala that during the pendency of the proceeding before the CWDT, the State of Kerala shall not proceed further with the construction of the weir leading to trans-basin diversion and shall maintain the *status quo* as it was existing on 7.2.2003.

(b) and (c) The mechanism for resolution of the Inter-State Water disputes exist in the form of Inter-State Water Disptues (ISWD) Act, 1956, enacted under Article 262 of the Constitution. The ISWD Act, 1956 has been amended on March 28, 2002 to provide for time-bound adjudication of the dispute by the Tribunals. Also as per the amended Act, the decision of the Tribunal after its publication in the Official Gazette shall have the same force as an Order or decree of the Supreme Court.